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THE LIBERTY CHAMPION

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MARCH 27, 2007 VOL. 24, NO. 17

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On the Resurrection

Christ's victory over death — why does it matter to us? **A4**

33 Miles Debuts CD

Life! previews the up-and-coming Christian band. **B5**



Monogram mission completed

By Amy Field
ASST. NEWS EDITOR

Rocks and shrubs made up the finishing touches that were added to the Liberty Mountain monogram on Thursday, March 8, during a ceremony for the final rock placement. Attendees at the event included Dr. Jerry Falwell, his sons Jerry Falwell, Jr. and Jonathan Falwell, as well as a number of other university officials. Lynchburg's ABC-affiliate, Channel 13, also covered the completion of the landmark. Lee Beaumont, the director of auxiliary services at Liberty, has been deeply involved with the project, working under Falwell Jr., whose idea it was to construct the monogram in the first place.

"This was an engineering feat," said Beaumont, referring to all the details that had to be monitored during the construction. "To work on a steep slope such as this and move all the required material up dirt logging roads in the winter shows the creativity and determination of those who planned and built the monogram." Because of his enthusiasm for this project, Falwell Jr. was able to take a vital part in the completion ceremony — driving one of the front-loaders used to build the monogram, he dumped the last few rocks into place.

He was pleased with the end result of the project, something he was inspired to do after seeing a number of other institutions with the logos displayed on nearby hills.

"I was hoping (the monogram) would look as good as the artist renderings that were done ahead of time. I think it actually looks better," said Falwell, Jr.

Please see MONOGRAM, page A3

The rites of springtime



SWAYING IN THE BREEZE — Warm March weather brought out students such as Bethany Martin, who is studying in her hammock in the DeMoss courtyard.

ALEX TOWERS

Newt Gingrich to speak at grad ceremony

By Joanne Tang
NEWS EDITOR

Former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich has been tapped as the commencement speaker for the graduation ceremonies to be held May 19, 2007.

Gingrich is notable for being a staunch Republican and a leader in the Republican party after the elections of 1994 led to a Republican majority in the House.

This will be Gingrich's second time speaking at Liberty.

He previously spoke to graduates in 1991.

The News & Advance reported March 6 that Gingrich will be speaking on "Rediscovering God in America," which will be a look at "the role of faith in our nation's history and future."

It is also the name of his book published in October 2006.

Like his commencement predecessor, Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Gingrich is bringing with him a bit of controversy.

Gingrich went on the air with Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family on March 9 to discuss radical Islam and its impact on America.

During this, Dobson asked him about his personal life.

Please see GINGRICH, page A3

Op. Iraqi Freedom enters fifth year

By Joanne Tang
NEWS EDITOR

"Someone had to do it." That seems to be the resounding words on the lips of many at Liberty. March 2007 marks the four-year anniversary of the war. Though it is not a large number, in times of conflict and warfare, it is practically a lifetime for many people, especially the ones serving overseas.

Launched in March 20, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom has brought thousands of troops from all across the world against the insurgents holding strong in Iraq. According to CNN, as of March 22, 2007, there have been "3,491 coalition deaths", among them 3,233

American troops. There is hardly a family that has not been impacted by the war in Iraq.

Students may remember that one of these fallen soldiers was Liberty graduate Jesse Strong, who was killed in Hadithah, Iraq in Jan. 26, 2005. Strong's family celebrated his life January with a one-year anniversary memorial at Liberty.

With the war entering a fifth year, critics are still debating the pros and cons of the war.

Regardless of public opinion, the war still goes on. Many critics highlight the cons of the war — the loss of life, the displaced families. They also cite politically related issues such as pursuit of oil and nuclear arms.

"I don't necessarily like (the war), but somebody had to do something. We were the ones bold enough to do something about it and are still doing it," said Abby Bess, a senior at Liberty.

"I don't think America's hands have been clean in the war, but I support (the president) and I would prefer him to the Democrats who don't support (the war)," said Uzziel Villanueva, a junior. She also cited the many freedoms that Iraqi citizens now have after Saddam Hussein's regime.

"Liberals are making this their own political gain and not for the good of the United States," said Philip Luca, a sophomore.

Please see WAR, page A3

LU boosts local economy, growth Liberty buys WDRL TV station

By David Thompson
NEWS REPORTER

Take Liberty University, Randolph-Macon College, Lynchburg College and Central Virginia Community College. Add to them some lesser known institutions like Christ College, and Lynchburg is a certifiable college town.

According to a March 10 article in the News & Advance, Lynchburg's population would likely have stagnated, or even decreased since 2000, were it not for the educational pull that the city has. As it is, the city only grew a bit more than 2,000 residents in six years to 67,756 in 2005.

"Who do we thank for our population increasing?" asked Lynchburg City Councilman Jeff Helgeson. "It's our institutions — primarily Liberty University."

Helgeson is no stranger to the Liberty community, having received an undergraduate degree in finance as well as a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Liberty.

He recognized the significance of Liberty's contributions to the community, noting that "if you take (the college growth) out of the equation, that's a pretty significant drain." Though not dis-

counting what the other institutions bring to the city, Helgeson noted that Lynchburg College is very close to its self-imposed cap of 2,500 students.

Randolph-Macon College consists currently of about 700 students, and CVCC, as a community college, will not likely attract people to the community, as its goal is to serve people already in the community.

Helgeson pointed out specifically the growth that Liberty is experiencing due to its programs and facilities, namely the 18 Division-I NCAA sports and the law school with its new Supreme Court courtroom.

Helgeson has personal experience in the sporting arena, having served as the chair for the Liberty Wrestling Foundation, which was instrumental in reestablishing Liberty's NCAA wrestling program. "It puts a lot of teeth into (their claims)," he said. "It's not just pie in the sky," referring to Dr. Jerry Falwell's goal of 25,000 residential students.

Also integral to the city is Liberty's location. The university sits in a commercially active part of Lynchburg.

Please see GROWTH, page A3

By Erin Fitch
NEWS REPORTER

Students may be able to soon flip to Channel 24 and watch a live broadcast of Liberty's events on its very own full-powered television station.

Liberty University has offered to purchase WDRL-TV, a former UPN affiliate based in Roanoke, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last year. The station will help promote Liberty in the region.

Its programming will include Liberty convocation services, theater productions and sporting events, as well as Sunday services from Thomas Road Baptist Church. Additional religious programs may also be broadcast, including those by Dr. Adrian Rogers and Dr. Charles Stanley.

The pending offer of \$6 million must be approved by the Federal Communications Commission and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court before it can be finalized.

However, WDRL owner and general manager Melvin Eleazer said he is happy about the offer, according to his statements in the Roanoke Times. Vice-Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. said his father and Eleazer became friends after their first meeting regarding the deal last summer.

"Mel has agreed to work with us for a few years after Liberty has purchased the station," he said in an interview.

Liberty officials say they plan to work with the staff of WDRL but will broadcast only original programming from the university.

Please see WDRL, page A2



FULL SERVICE — WDRL will provide LU with all the needed equipment.

ALEX TOWERS

BEST SERVED COLD ...OR NOT AT ALL

★★★★★★★★★★★★★ *Dave Thompson* ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Well, some of us doubted it would get here in one piece, but it's officially here – the season of romance, flower petals, green life, songbirds, and lest anyone accuse me of being too romantic... baseball!

If anyone asks me what the next significant holiday is, the first thing out of my mouth is "Opening Day, April 1." Then I realize they were probably talking about opening day for the Red Sox, a day later.

But, all joking aside, we all know Easter is coming. So, I thought I'd share with you some tips for celebrating the egg-laying bunny (evolutionary freak) and his splashy pastel colors that don't go with anybody's pants, but get donned anyway. So, here's my prescribed medicine for how to make your Easter less-than disastrous.

1) Guys, this is the one day of the year, where you can wear pastels and feel good about yourself. So, if your bent runs toward pink, magenta or outright lavender, and you've been a good boy and saved if for that special day, go for it! We won't accuse you of crimes against gender on Easter, because deep down inside, we're there for you.

2) Girls, if you know your guy is just dying to don shades of pretty-boy, encourage it. Just for today. I know, I know, you want him to look all manly and dignified, so that by contrast you'll be the perfect complement, but for the sake of his self respect, just bite the bullet on one day of the year. Do you want him to go about in inner torment for the rest of his life because he's not allowed (on even the springiest of days) to express his inner pastel? At least let him wear salmon (which they all claim isn't really pink, but whatever).

3) Guys and girls, lay aside the baseball banter for one day. I know. It's your life. Believe, me, I understand, and if I can follow my own advice here, I'll be a happy man. But

family relatives are going to be more concerned about the ham and potato salad than they are with Alex Rodriguez's early season slump (and trust me, he will have an early season slump). Sit around and listen to Grandpa's oft-repeated reminiscences that have been around more times that mom's potatoes left over from Christmas (she told you they were twice-baked, didn't she?). Trust me – your relatives want to remark about your boyfriend's pastels, or your girlfriend's long-suffering in letting you wear them, not your fantasy score. "Why, in my day, baseball was just a rock and a stick, and uh... Say, how many home runs does Babe Ruth have this year?"

4) Pick up a copy of Darwin's "Origin of Species," and see if he ever mentions an Easter Bunny. That dude is a mix between a duck, something resembling a rabbit, and something intriguingly human. Think about it.

He's supposed to be a bunny (at least he hops and has big ears), but he lays eggs (okay, maybe not *that* way), walks around upright, and if you've ever seen one of those big fluffy purple monstrosities at the park, his hands are distinctively human. How else would he "lay" the eggs? Unless you want to say that he's a she, in which case, the evolutionary implications would be staggering.

5) Finally, just relax. Forget about the test you have on Tuesday (just hope to heaven you studied for it on Friday). Nobody wants to hear about how much stress you're under, especially over a holiday. Trust me – they'd rather hear about Mark Prior's forty-sixth surgery or how Randy Johnson lost his twelfth straight game because he forgot his extra strength arthritis medicine.

Contact Dave Thompson at dbthompson@liberty.edu.

*Girls, if you know
your guy is just dying
to don shades of
pretty-boy, encourage
it.*

Have a question? Ask the ILRC

By **Dave Thompson**
NEWS REPORTER

Beginning this week, the Guillermin ILRC is launching a new program intended to boost student awareness of library services. The initiative, entitled "Got Questions? Ask Us!" is aimed at generating student interest and awareness about library services, as well as acquainting the students with research methods and policies concerning books and online sources.

The specific help being offered is threefold-in-depth help with specific reference and research questions, quick and easy answers to frequently asked questions (hours, policies, etc) and reference help through IM, e-mail, on the phone or in person.

Five days a week excluding Saturday and Sunday, at varying times during the day, a library student worker will be stationed near the entrance to the campus library wearing a bright yellow shirt with the "Got Questions?" logo. The student will be available to answer students or other patrons' questions, or direct them to a source that would provide the answer.

Marcy Pride, the head of the Public Services department of the ILRC, stated that the goal was simply "an effort to help people quickly get answers to some of their questions."

The most common questions and their answers will be compiled into a list of frequently asked questions, to be posted on Liberty's library Web site.

"Even when the ILRC isn't open, a student could conceivably go to our Web site and find answers to some of their (FAQs)," said Pride.

Contact David Thompson at dbthompson@liberty.edu.



CALEB ATKINS

GOT QUESTIONS? — Soon students will get their answers.



ARCHIVE PHOTO BY STEVEN FINKEL

UP FOR INTERPRETATION — A student evaluates a work of art at the first Student Art and Film Expo in 2005.

Student Art Expo set to dazzle senses

By **Lydia Christoph**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Students will have the opportunity to judge the work of their peers as Student Activities opens the doors for its second annual Student Art Expo and Film Festival.

The festival will be held on Friday March 30 from 8p.m. to midnight in the Schilling Center.

Any student can enter the competition with a maximum of two submissions. The categories for the expo are traditional, graphic, photography, and film.

The event will be complete with music, coffee and pastries.

Somewhat like American Idol, students are given a ballot and a program when they arrive and are given the opportunity to vote on their favorite pieces.

For every first, second and third prize in each of the four categories, the artists will receive cash prizes. The winner of Best in Show receives a \$100 prize.

Last year, Student Activities was very impressed by the amount of quality entries

that they received. Spokesman Nick George said that the purpose of the expo is to "expose talent on campus."

Student Activities coordinator Alesha Chandler said that students have been asking about this year's event long before the deadline, showing almost unheard-of interest.

One winning entry last year was Sarah Yeats' mixed media entry entitled "Phenomenological Me."

In her work, Yeats had pieced together special words and pieces of material that had been particularly meaningful to her over the years.

She constructed an artistic representation of her life with letters and fabric.

Chandler said that "people were coming by to look at it all night. They would come close, then step back, then walk around and come back to it later."

For more information, you can go to the Art Expo Facebook group or call Student Activities at 434-592-3061.

Contact Lydia Christoph at lkchristoph@liberty.edu.

WDRL: Hitting the airwaves

Continued from page 1

WDRL currently broadcasts reruns of television shows such as "Bonanza," "Mad About You" and "The Nanny," as well as Baltimore Orioles and Charlotte Bobcats sporting events.

Though the agreement to purchase the station was announced just this past March 5, the maneuver has been one of Dr. Jerry Falwell Jr.'s long-term goals for the university's advancement.

"Dad has always thought that Liberty should have a television station in the Lynchburg/Roanoke market," said Falwell, Jr.

In the 1980s, Dr. Falwell put in a bid at auction for Roanoke's channels 21 and 27, which eventually were purchased by Fox. However, the failed bid successfully led to the creation of low-powered WTLU now operated by Liberty.

Falwell, Jr. said the recent bid for WDRL (whose call letters stand for "Danville, Roanoke, Lynchburg") came after a search performed on behalf of the university by a Florida media broker.

The broker called several television stations to investigate whether or not they were for sale, and with a call to WDRL, Eleazer mentioned he was interested in selling.

"We knew nothing of the bankruptcy when we had the broker call," said Falwell, Jr.

While WTLU's Liberty Channel is broadcast nationwide through the satellite Sky Angel net-

work, Liberty will be able to reach over 445,000 homes in the western region of Virginia with a full-powered signal, according to news sources.

Falwell, Jr. also said the station will help advance Liberty as a recruiting tool.

"As a full-powered station, all cable systems in the Roanoke, Lynchburg and Danville markets must carry WDRL's signal. The station will also make Liberty athletic events, dramas and chapel services available to all households within a 100-mile radius," he said.

"We wanted to give the university a higher profile in central Virginia and beyond," said Dr. Falwell in an Associated Press news report.

While WDRL may take the lead in Liberty's event programming, communications students can look forward to what Falwell, Jr. described as "an excellent learning opportunity" in working more closely with WTLU.

"After the purchase of WDRL, Liberty may convert WTLU to a student-run station," he said.

Senior Amy Brucker agreed the opportunity would be valuable for students. "It would be a great way for students to have a hands-on learning experience where they can help run a station and learn in a classroom environment," she said.

Students such as Brucker already enjoy listening to Liberty's student-run radio station, WWMC "The Light." A more student-oriented

WTLU would provide an additional media format that young people could enjoy.

Contact Erin Fitch at efitch@liberty.edu.

THE LIBERTY CHAMPION

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MONOGRAM: Gazebo planned NEWT: Past thrust into spotlight

Continued from page 1

"I have looked at other university mountain monograms online, and I think LU's is by far the largest and best-looking monogram of any of the ones I have seen. It is much more tastefully done than most monograms."

The red and white rocks that were used came from Appomattox Lime Company, and the plants came from nurseries in the Lynchburg area.

Six months of hard work, hours of planting foliage and placing around 4,000 tons of stone have gone into making Liberty's monogram the emblem that it is.

Great lengths were taken

to ensure the consistency of the environment surrounding the monogram as well.

"All the trees that were removed were chipped and were returned to the site in the form of mulch," said Beaumont. Although the monogram has been completed, there will be at least one more expected addition in the near future to the mountainside.

"A gazebo will be placed up there soon for people to sit relax and enjoy the view," said Beaumont.

The monogram stands as a landmark for Liberty University, and it is visible from miles away. Students have reported a clear view of the red and white symbol from as far as the top of

Sharp Top Mountain, in the Blue Ridge Parkway. While the monogram is meant to represent the university, it may soon be seen as a part of the Lynchburg community as well.

"I think it will become a signature of this region. (People) will start seeing it in promotional materials for both Liberty and other groups in the Lynchburg area," said Falwell Jr.

The monogram will definitely be mainly for the school's representation, however. "Liberty athletics will...find creative ways to use the monogram as a marketing tool," said Falwell Jr.

Contact Amy Field at afield@liberty.edu.

Continued from page 1

Gingrich then admitted to an extramarital affair in the 1990s at the same time that then-president Bill Clinton was having an affair with Monica Lewinsky. Dobson asked him if the rumors "were true that you were in an affair with a woman, obviously who wasn't your wife, at the same time that Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky were having their escapade."

In response, Gingrich said, "Well, the fact is that the honest answer is yes."

After this admission, he also said, "There are things in my own life that I have turned to God and gotten on my knees and prayed about and sought God's forgiveness."

"I believe deeply that people fall short and that people have to recognize they have to turn to God to seek forgiveness and seek mercy," he also said.

"There are certainly times where I have fallen short of God's standards."

Liberty senior Phil Hawkins said Gingrich's admittance of wrongdoing does not change his opinion of him.

"Only because Clinton's affair wasn't a real surprise for me," he said.

"Most people are shocked at both (Clinton and Gingrich) — I'm (shocked at) neither."

"(He is) one of the brightest politicians of our era," said School of Business professor S. Greg Halford.

"Show me a politician who doesn't have any skeletons in their closet."

After news hit of Gingrich's admission, Dr. Jerry Falwell, chancellor of Liberty, expressed his praise of Gingrich for admitting his wrongdoings.

In an article posted on the Moral Majority Web site, Falwell said, "I have been very impressed with the spiritual maturity of this man and am convinced that he has been honest and forthright in clarifying

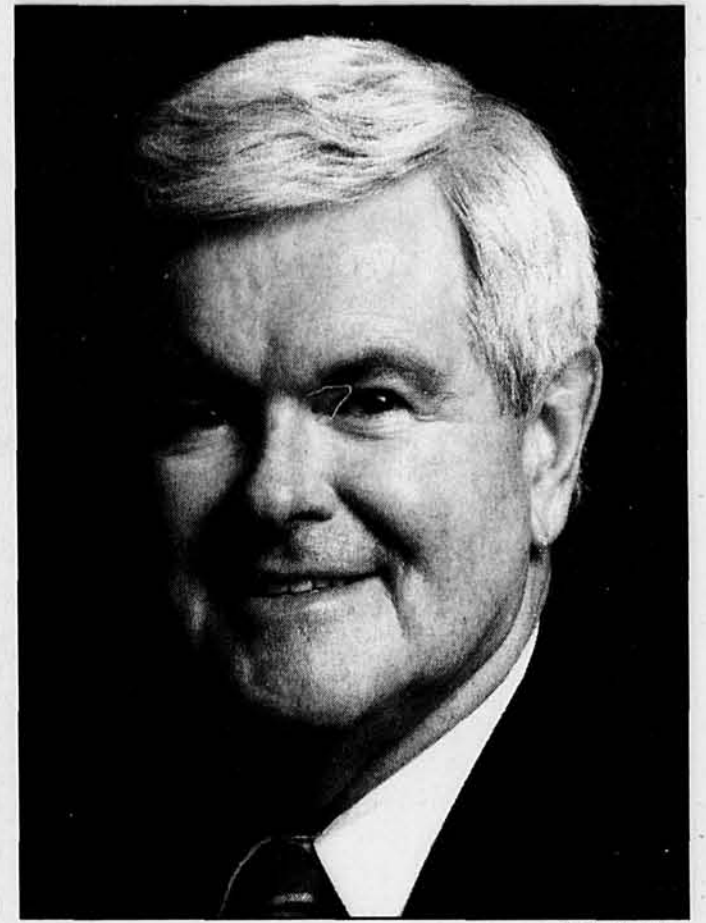
his past failings and his quest, as a Christian, for God's forgiveness." While Gingrich has not officially announced his bid for the presidential nomination, it is possible he will announce his decision in the summer.

"I'll reserve my final judgment on Gingrich's selection (of commencement speech) when I hear the man speak," said Hawkins.

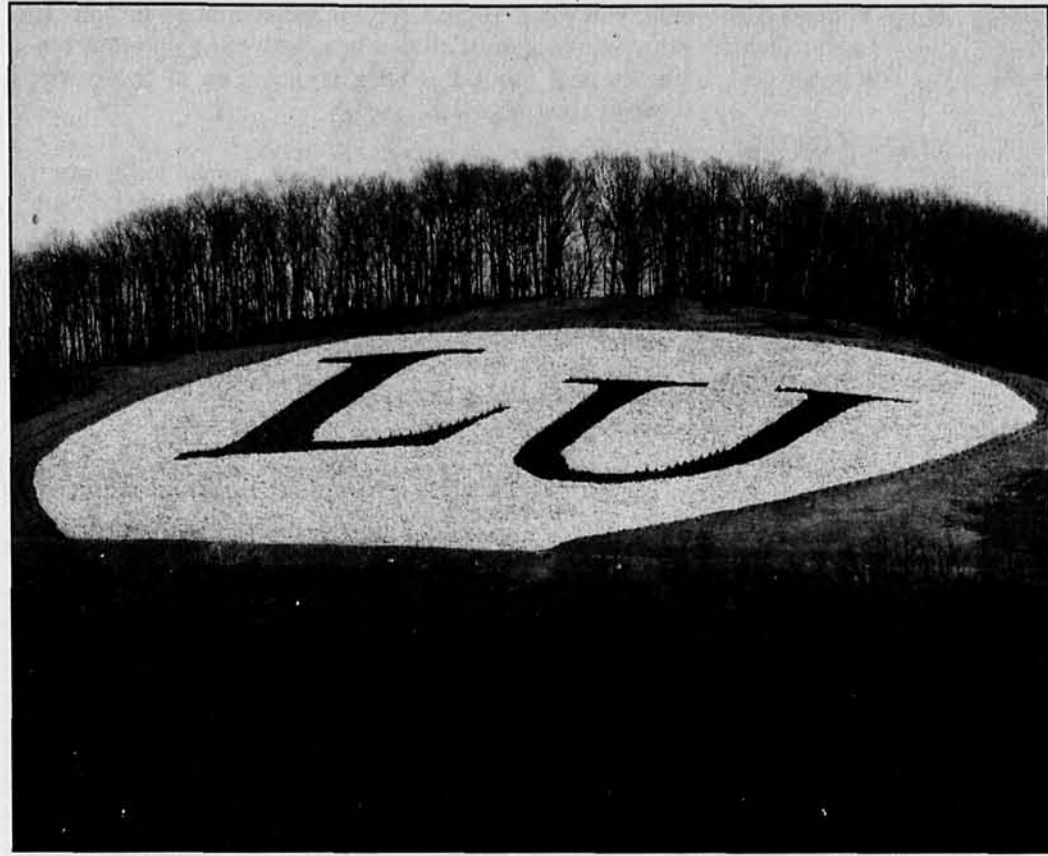
"If he gives us a true graduation message, I will be glad to hear his advice and partake in his wisdom and experience."

For the full discussion with Dobson and Gingrich, please see http://www.oneplace.com/Ministries/Focus_on_the_Family/Archives.asp?bcd=2007-3-9.

Contact Joanne Tang at jtang@liberty.edu.



FROM WASHINGTON TO LYNCHBURG — Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich is set to speak to the class of 2007 in May. Gingrich is considered by many to be responsible for leading the Republican party to a majority in the House in 1995.



CALEB ATKINS

JOB WELL DONE — With the last stone moved into place, the monogram is finished. A gazebo is planned that will give students a bird's-eye view of the surrounding Lynchburg cityscape and mountains.

GROWTH: More on the way

Continued from page 1

Ward III, which Helgeson represents, not only includes Liberty, but also the majority of the city's restaurants and several major businesses, such as Wal-Mart, River Ridge Mall and others.

What is disconcerting for Helgeson is the lack of city tax revenue that goes toward improvement in Ward III.

"The total meals tax (last year) was \$9.4 million," said Helgeson. "Of (that), 66.81 percent (\$6.3 million) comes from Ward III."

The money in itself, however, was not Helgeson's concern. His concern was the lack of money that gets used to better that ward.

"(If) you're making it here, make it better over here," he said, exasperated.

A possible project he mentioned would be to attempt to alleviate the bumper-to-bumper traffic that students and Lynchburg residents currently face on Wards Road.

"That's where we as a city need to say,

'Liberty's giving us a lot of money — maybe we'd better start using some of that money over there,'" said Helgeson.

In addition, he noted that "a truckload" of money is spent in the downtown area, including a \$3 million beautification project.

The city can expect to gain significantly more revenue in the next few years, according to Helgeson.

His prediction put Liberty at 130 percent of its current population by the year 2010.

If that were to hold true, by three years from now, the city of Lynchburg would have more than matched its previous five-year increase in three years due simply to the influx of Liberty students.

"Liberty is glad to benefit the city," Liberty's Vice-Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. told the News & Advance. "Just to be able to say that you are growing shows vibrance."

Contact David Thompson at dbthompson@liberty.edu.

WAR: What will 2007 bring?

Continued from page 1

There are several landmark events that have happened since March 2003, including the capture of Hussein in December 2003 and the death of his two sons, Uday and Qusay, in July 2003.

BBC News reported that both sons were ranked two and three on the U.S. government's "most wanted Iraqis" list, which at that time consisted of 55 Iraqis. Other events include the uncovering of American forces abusing American-held prisoners at Abu Ghraib, a former Hussein regime prison in Iraq.

Despite any grievances the public may have with the war, good news still emerges. One of the outcomes of the war in Iraq is the building of schools and other educational buildings.

For instance, in January 2005 the Army Corp of Engineers awarded \$1.3 million toward the construction of several schools in Dahok, Iraq.

The construction project consisted of two school buildings, another building for kindergarten classes and a secondary school. The project was given to Dahok construction workers. About 80 other schools in the region were renovated and conditions for children were improved.

What is on the horizon as the U.S. enters a fifth year of conflict? In January 2007, President Bush went before the American people and said he planned to implement a "surge" of troops to increase security in Iraq, give Iraqi police forces more control of the security and overall increase stability.

In the following months, Bush appealed to Congress to approve a new budget that would fund the surge as well as other expenses in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the Associated Press, in March 2007, Congress approved \$124 billion to be used in Iraq and Afghanistan, but added a clause that requires a gradual decrease of troops leading to a withdrawal of all troops by March 2008.

The Associated Press said that according to the Congressional Research Service, \$500 billion has already been spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Whether the war ends this year or in three years, or whether one believes the fight is justified or that it is a waste of resources, it remains clear that those in power must see and listen to the American people. Only time will tell what the future of Iraq holds for the freedoms of both Iraqis and Americans.

Contact Joanne Tang at jtang@liberty.edu.

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OPINION

"Our Lord has written the promise of Resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."

— Martin Luther

The basis of our faith

Reflecting on the Resurrection of Christ

As I have grown up, one of my favorite memories has always been Easter Sunday. I loved going shopping for a new Easter dress to wear to church. I loved coloring Easter eggs with my younger brother and opening the Easter baskets from our parents. We would even have an Easter egg hunt at my grandmother's house. It was a race between my brother and I to see who could find the most plastic eggs with the dollar bills hidden inside (we weren't big on candy). These traditions, along with the Easter bunny, are what most people associate with the religious holiday. And while my family did partake in these secular activities, my absolute favorite tradition is Sunrise Service.



karimitchell

I attend a small, white country church that was built in 1895. Inside are pews lined with hymnals and beautiful glass windows. Attendance is small, under 100. Every Easter, the congregation meets in the cemetery behind the church just before sunrise. My pastor plays guitar and we sing songs like "Up from the Grave He Arose" and "He Lives." There is just something so special about standing in the graveyard and worshipping as the sun rises above the trees. I can only imagine what Mary felt at the tomb, having seen the real risen Son.

This is what Easter is all about – the risen Son. Over the years, there have been several claims that have tried to deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Last year, it was the DaVinci Code. This year, it is the Lost Tomb of Jesus. These attacks are an attempt to strip Christians of their faith by denying the one thing that their faith is founded on – the resurrection. This one event is the core of Christianity. Dr. Ed Hindson emphasized this point in convocation last Wednesday.

Take a look at scripture. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Did you actually take the time to read through those verses? Or did you see the reference and skim because you are already familiar with the passages? It's just something to think about. Here's another thing to think about. What if God never gave His Son? What if he didn't die on a cross and resurrect three days later? All we would have left would be words on a page and meaningless religion.

"What if God never gave His Son? What if He didn't die on a cross and resurrect three days later? All we would have left would be words on a page and meaningless religion."

Go back to the above verses and read them carefully, word-for-word. Allow the power of scripture to overwhelm you and ignite in you a passion to tell the world about the Savior who has come to give us everlasting life!

There are many who don't know this Savior. They are searching for answers and the enemy is telling them lies that deny Christian claims. It is our responsibility as

Christians to take this attack seriously and share the gospel, the Truth, with those who are seeking. I Peter 3:15 says to be ready to give an account to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. In other words, I must always be prepared to share my testimony and rebut the false accusations of those who come against my faith.

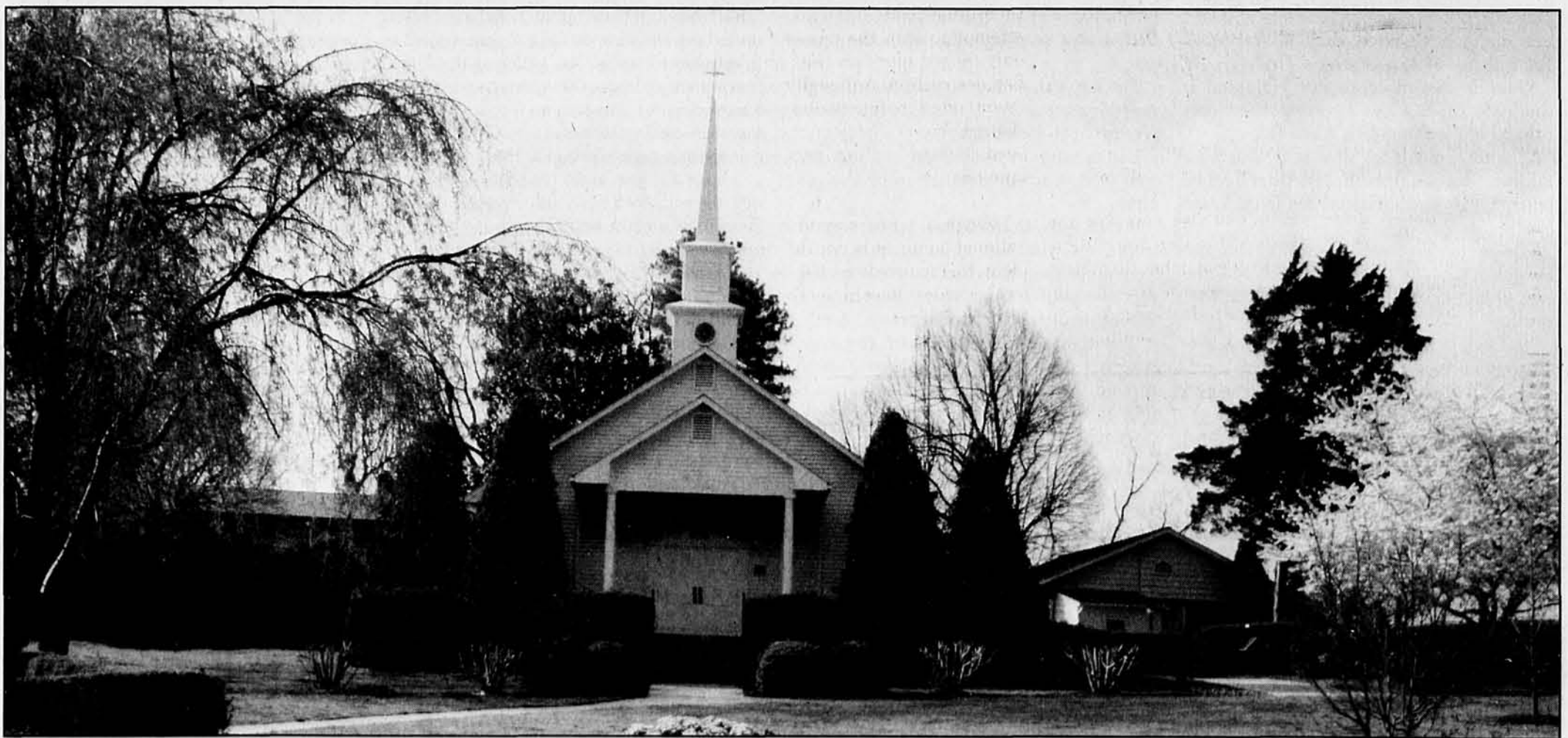
In order to be an effective witness, I must know why I believe what I believe. This was the topic of Dr. Ergun Caner's message in church on Wednesday night. "Because I said so" is not a satisfying argument for someone who is searching for answers. I don't recommend starting a conversation with a skeptic with the phrase, "The Bible says..." because the argument is rarely convincing to someone who doesn't believe its contents. As Caner said, this is circular reasoning.

Honestly, I used to not care. It was a legitimate argument to me. The Bible and its claims are true, and whether or not someone chooses to believe them does not make them any less true. True. Unfortunately, that mindset stemmed from a disregard for the lost and a misunderstanding of my responsibility as a Christ follower.

If you truly want to reach out to those who are struggling or who are asking the tough questions, you would do well to meet them at their level, not make them rise to yours. Remember, scripture is important when sharing the gospel, but it's the power that made the resurrection possible that changes hearts.

Christ wants us to be obedient and faithful in sharing the Truth. The truth is that Jesus is the risen Savior and His body is not in that "lost tomb." It's almost Easter. Take the time to reflect on the importance of the Resurrection. Believe this Truth and know why you believe it. Then passionately share it with others. Share it with everyone.

Contact Kari Mitchell at kdmitchell2@liberty.edu.



CALEB ATKINS

SPEAK UP: How do you celebrate Easter?



"By reflecting on God's amazing grace and love for His children."

—Samuel Bernhardt, So. Vassalboro, Maine



"At home we celebrate with my family in the morning and open our Easter baskets before church. Then we go to church and then to Easter dinner at my grandmother's."

—Janine Conklin, Jr. North Stonington, Conn.



"Bunny Soup."

—Blake Lunsford, Sr. Mt. Pleasant, N.C.



"Definitely an Easter egg hunt, and I still get an Easter basket."

—Savannah Moore, So. Trinity, N.C.



"(We) roast a rabbit. We eat the Easter Bunny after Sunday morning church service. It doesn't taste very good, but it's too much fun to give up the tradition."

—Monica Paladini, Sr. Modesto, Calif.



"We do Easter egg hunts, go to church -- that sort of thing. This year I may go to Virginia Beach, since we have the Monday after Easter off!"

—Emily Ellington, So. Greensboro, N.C.

NICK POOLE

COMMENTARY

Born (again) under the sign of the cross



willmayer

I recently received an e-mail that was one of those that have been forwarded over 1,000 times before it finally arrives in your inbox. The person who forwarded this e-mail is the type who usually is the first to pass along a message about God showing His power, keeping soldiers in our prayers, or keeping God in our schools. However, this e-mail contained something quite different – information about astrological signs.

There are a lot of Christians who have, what I believe to be, an unhealthy curiosity with astrology. In fact 27 percent of people who identify themselves as a Christian, also say they believe in astrology, according to a Harris Poll. As Christians, we are prone to believe in the supernatural. After all, we believe in God, angels, demons and that our souls will live on for eternity after our bodies pass away. But knowing all this, shouldn't we be more afraid of the powers behind this seemingly innocent diversion?

We are warned in Scripture not to look up to the heavens in worship. Deuteronomy 4:19 says, "And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven" (KJV).

"As Christians, we are prone to believe in the supernatural. After all, we believe in God, angels, demons and that our souls will live on for eternity..."

God also warns of the consequences that may befall the astrologers. Isaiah 47:13-14 says, "Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the

fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it" (KJV).

Mal Fletcher, host of the Christian talk show, "Edges" talks about the danger behind the fascination people have with the occult. "Behind every occult practice there's the spiritual power of deception," said Fletcher.

Astrology is a good example of this. One former professional astrologer warned people to think twice before they get involved with astrology because, "when you turn to astrology you are actually turning to advice from the ancient gods of [pagan] religion."

Fletcher went onto say, "Astrology is a doorway into spiritual deception. Only God really knows our future; and only he can be trusted to guide us well."

The next time someone asks you what sign you are, I hope you'll consider a new answer, an answer that doesn't so much concern the arrangement of the planets you were born under, but more so the sign under which you were born again – the sign of the cross.

Contact Will Mayer at swmayer@liberty.edu.

America should not ban flag burning

The flag of the United States has been a symbol of American pride and resilience since the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act on June 14, 1777. According to usflag.org, although many believe Betsy Ross to have been the first to create a tangible flag, its origin is unverifiable. Since the flag's formation hundreds of years ago, the laws surrounding it have fluctuated from state to state.

Congress created a code in December of 1942 stating how to go about displaying the flag, but no penalties were created for ignoring it. With the official code in mind, each of the individual states were free to create appropriate laws concerning the patriotic symbol. In Texas vs. Johnson, a case that prosecuted Johnson for burning a



clairemelsi

American citizens should have a great respect for their nation's flag, burning the flag should not be outlawed.

I have a great respect for all of our armed forces, and personally find any form of flag desecration to be intolerable and incredibly disrespectful, but by defining what people can and cannot do with

the symbol, we disregard the very liberty soldiers are fighting for. It is only because of the laying down of valiant lives that immature, irreverent protestors are even able to display such lack of respect.

In 1989, President George H.W. Bush passed the Flag Protection Act as a constitutional amendment. According to esquilax.com, this amendment was created in an attempt to stop the desecration of the flag but instead only caused more protests and increased the amount of flag destruction. Although the development of new regulation often requires disagreement, confrontation and change, those capable of creating progress should be civilized enough to find respectful ways to communicate opinions.

Though the flag should be respected as a symbol of national honor, it is not the responsibility of the government to regulate whether or not burning it should be legal. The less government regulation there is, the better. Government should limit its regulating to decisions that

are essential to the country's well being. Flag burning, though devastating to national morale, does not, for the most part, physically endanger anyone.

Once officials start tampering with age-old rules and establishing more and more laws, a slippery slope of intolerance is formed down which may eventually limit even more of our freedoms. The more power there is in the hands of the people the better. Outlawing flag burning would obviously be an infringement of Constitutional rights.

Still, the whole concept of a soldier dying for his country so that his neighbor can burn that same flag is a little baffling to me. Men die so that others may freely express their opinions in whichever way they choose. And when people protest disrespectfully, they really are disrespecting those who have fought to give them their freedom. Yet, in the end, as ugly of an idea as it may be, that is the beauty that makes America. I think that we ought to respect our Armed Forces, but by outlawing the desecration of the flag we defy the very freedoms our soldiers are fighting for.

In the end, creating laws to make burning the American flag illegal would hurt our society more than it would help it. An oxymoron is established when the flag that stands for freedom is smothered by regulation. I hope that the government will recognize that in trying to control every aspect of civilization, it stifles the flame of freedom so patriotically embodied in the magnificent American flag.


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"...by defining what we can and can not do with the symbol, we disregard the very liberty our soldiers are fighting for."

flag in protest, the court concluded that under the First Amendment the protestor could not be prosecuted.

Since the ruling, some believe that flag laws are not taken as seriously. Those punished for flag desecration are penalized because of their sentiment rather than their action, and by punishing the desecrators, the government defies the rights for which the flag stands. While ideally,


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The road to Liberty: How biology professor Dr. Marcus Ross became a paleontologist and caused creation controversy

By David Thompson
NEWS REPORTER

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" It's a question that everyone is familiar with on some level or another. Some want to play sports, some want to preach, some want to be a doctor- and to some, paleontology holds a particular appeal.



UNIVERSITY ARCHIVE PHOTO
ROSS

Dr. Marcus Ross was one such kid. "My entire life has been, in many ways, consumed with dinosaurs and prehistoric animals," he said.

Though many of the dreams of youth kick the bucket somewhere around the high school years, or even sooner, Ross's dream held out at least that long.

According to him, "Not a lot of people have (their desire to be a paleontologist) in (their high school yearbook), even of those that actually, do, few of (them) are actually able to make it all the way through."

But Ross made it through on a level that most childish fantasies never realize. The New York Times recently ran an article on the peculiarity of his situation. You see, Ross is a creationist. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Rhode Island. Cross-reference creationist, paleontology and "Rhode Island" in a Google search, and the first full page will link to articles concerning Ross, many of them blogs. Ross is making news.

Born in Rhode Island, Ross became a Christian at about five years old. According to him, "By the time I was ten, I guess I realized that the dinosaur books were saying one thing and the Bible seemed to be saying another."

To his own surprise later in life, he said he realizes that he thought through serious scientific and theological issues at that young age.

"Could the days be really big long days, or could God have made anything, then started all over again," he wondered. "I went through...the Gap Theory and Theistic Evolution all on a very child, kiddie level," he said.

Through his school years, his dream of a career in paleontology stayed intact. Upon graduation, Ross enrolled at Penn State University "because of the excellent geology program. It was there that I actually started getting my first taste of truly young-earth creationist material."

"The Genesis Flood," by Henry Morris and John Whitcomb, proved to be the fire starter for Ross, who subsequently began lapping up creationist material.

Though all of his college courses focused around secular science, Ross's faith remained unscathed through the undergraduate level.

After receiving his B.S. in Earth Science, he found himself applying to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. He planned to earn his Master's degree in paleontology, but things got rocky along the way.

Through some misconceptions and paranoia by staff after a fateful letter to the newspaper's editor, as well as the complications caused for his schoolwork, Ross found himself on academic probation, his thesis committee depleted, and no research project.

But through the grace of Dr. Gale Bishop, a museum curator who took several disadvantaged students under his wing, Ross was able to complete the paleontology program and subsequently applied to the University of Rhode Island for his doctorate.

The affiliation at URI is what has perhaps cast Ross into the spotlight. "It was a far more rigorous academic program (than SDSMT)." His program focused on the extinction of the mosasaurs, a marine reptile group thought to have died off at the end of the Cretaceous period.

In a seminar class at SDSMT, Ross discovered the severe lack of conclusive research that had been performed regarding mosasaurs, and though he was unable to research them for his master's pro-

gram, he found a welcome home for the idea at URI.

Publishing his doctoral dissertation, however, meant "Playing By Science's Rules," which was the headline of the New York Times article.

In essence, though Ross's creationist views completely rejected the evidence upon which he based his article, the article was written according to that evidence.

"What I was worried about (when the story came out in the Times)," said Ross, "was that the people back at URI in my department would take a lot of heat. Taking on a creationist student in the geological sciences and letting them get through to a Ph.D., some people hold the advisor culpable."

During his time at URI, Ross came to a situation where grants were in question

and an outside job was a necessity. Through an association with Dr. David DeWitt, who heads up Liberty's Creation Studies program, Ross came to Lynchburg - and the rest is history in the writing.

"My wife and I love the town," he said. "It's about the same size (as Rapid City, South Dakota). It's got all the stuff you need, and very easily you can get out into the woods and hike."

Though he plans to stay around Lynchburg and at Liberty for some time, Ross is only 30 years old, and there is plenty of life left for him to live. "There is a rich and rewarding life following Christ wherever He leads you," he says. "For me, he's led me here."

Contact David Thompson at dbthompson@liberty.edu.

Spring is in the air...



CALEB ATKINS



ALEX TOWERS

"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade."

— Charles Dickens

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Sports

Baer's Blathers

Football in March

Matthew Baer scrutinizes the Houston Texans quarterback situation after the trade.

Jared Pierce examines Liberty football's 2007 non-conference schedule.

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libertychampionsports@gmail.com

The Liberty Champion

(434) 582-2124

Liberty picks McKay as new men's coach

By Jared Pierce
ASST. SPORTS EDITOR

After 26 days of diligent searching, Liberty University Athletic Director Jeff Barber announced on Monday that he had found his man — former University of New Mexico Head Coach Ritchie McKay, who becomes the seventh head basketball coach in Liberty's history.

McKay — the first black head coach of any athletic team for Liberty — brings 11 years of major college head coaching experience to Liberty, with stints at Portland State, Colorado State and Oregon State.

"We wanted a coach with major Division-I experience," said Barber. "The candidate pool was deep and talented."

He arrived at Portland State to revive the Viking program after 16 years, and he was the youngest head coach in Division-I basketball at the tender age of 30.

The team, which plays in the Big Sky Conference, posted a 24-29 record during his two seasons with the Vikings.

He used the success to grab

the job at Colorado State, which just hired a new coach of its own.

At Colorado State, McKay posted two straight winning seasons and an appearance in the NIT, where his Rams lost in the semifinals to eventual champion California.

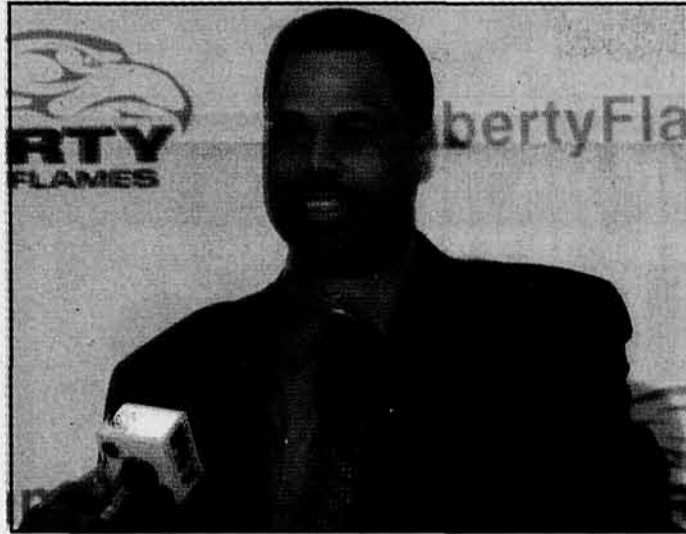
McKay then moved on to Pac-10's Oregon State, which proved to be his least successful stop.

His Beavers posted two straight losing seasons with depleted rosters and young, inexperienced teams. McKay then returned to the Mountain West Conference with the University of New Mexico Lobos.

It proved to be his longest stint, as he posted an 82-69 record over five seasons. In the 2004-05 season, McKay and the Lobos won the Mountain West and participated in the NCAA Tournament.

His final days at New Mexico were tenuous at best. The program had been to the NCAA Tournament seven times during the 1990s, but only the one time under McKay.

Please see MCKAY, page B2



NEW KING OF THE COURT — Former New Mexico Head Coach Ritchie McKay was introduced Monday as Randy Dunton's replacement for men's basketball head coach. McKay has one NIT and one NCAA appearance under his belt.



AHEAD OF THE TAG — Sophomore Kenneth Negron slides safely into first base during the Flames 10-2 victory over the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. Negron was a big part of the Flames offense, as he went three-for-four with one RBI and two runs scored.

Baseball flops after series-opening victory

By Mitchell Malcheff
SPORTS REPORTER

The Liberty Flames bats were scorching hot and the University of Maryland-Baltimore County Retrievers could not seem to find their offense last Wednesday in a non-conference game at Worthington Stadium.

The Flames offense notched 14 hits and 10 runs while the defense allowed only two runs behind a strong outing from junior David Stokes — who enjoyed the luxury of pitching most of the game with a comfortable lead.

"It really helps out a lot (pitching with a lead) — you can go in there and

throw a lot more fastballs and try to get ahead in the count," he said.

With the win, Stokes improved to 4-3 on the year. Head Coach Matt Royer was pleased with how well the Flames performed from both the plate and the field.

"We got good pitching (and) the guys swung the bats," he said. "We had 14 hits, Dave did not walk a man in seven innings. We did a lot of good things today, and hopefully we can continue that."

The Liberty attack was led by the three-headed monster of sophomore Kenneth Negron, senior Tim Nanry and junior P.K. Keller — all of whom recorded three hits in the game.

Nanry has been a huge source of

offense this season, batting .333 with 22 RBI, including four home runs and seven doubles. No player for the Retrievers mustered more than one hit in the game as the Flames won big, 10-2.

On Friday against the High Point Panthers, senior Phil John came up big for the Flames in the first of a three-game weekend series.

John went three-for-five from the plate and netted four RBIs to lead the Flames to a 7-5 victory.

John has been a tough out this year at the plate, striking out just 12 times in 22 games en route to a .417 average with 18 RBIs.

Please see BASEBALL, page B3

Softball struggles but defeats Top-10 Michigan

By Will Luper
SPORTS REPORTER

This weekend was a busy one for the Lady Flames softball team. First, they traveled to Kentucky to participate in the Women's 4 Women Tournament, hosted by the University of Louisville.

The Lady Flames came out of the weekend with only one win notched under their belt, however, as they handed Top-10 foe Michigan one of its two losses in the tournament.

Tournament play started Friday at 10:30 a.m. as the Lady Flames faced off against the hosts, the Louisville Cardinals.

The Cardinals got on the board first when Brooke McCrain hit the ball high towards left field.

Senior Beth Hensley was unable to make the catch and Louisville's Audrey Rendon scored from second base.

Liberty capitalized on a sloppy play from the Cardinals, though, as Hensley tied the game in the bottom of the next inning.

The tie lasted until extra innings, when Louisville had an offensive outburst, scoring three runs in the top of the eighth inning.

The Cardinals' Melissa Roth hit a single to right field that allowed Candi Hicks to score from third.

A two-run padding put the Cardinals at ease as Courtney Moore knocked in Melissa Roth on a two-run home run, giving Louisville a comfortable 4-1 lead.

The Lady Flames were not out just yet, though, as senior Jessica Moore hit a two-run home run of her own.

The rally fell short though as Hensley hit a ball from relief pitcher Kristen Wadwell straight to center field, allowing for an easy out and ending the ball game, 4-3.

Liberty continued tournament play against California, which was ranked 25th in the nation.

The Lady Flames scored in the bottom of the first as senior Dawn Jeffs was batted in by junior Ashley Williams.

In the top of the third inning, California showed why they are nationally ranked, beginning an offensive outburst that scored 18 runs in just four innings.

Liberty could not find the answer in its bullpen as four pitchers attempted to save the game, all of whom came up empty in their efforts.

The game was not lost in the third, though, as the Flames tied the Golden Bears with five runs of their own.

Junior Shannon McKain, senior Jessica Moore, sopho-

more Beth Bennett, sophomore Courtney Johnson and Williams all hit home plate as Liberty fought back into the game.

As earlier in the day though, the rally fell short,

and the Lady Flames dropped the contest. A sequence of 12 unanswered runs gave California the 18-6 victory.

Please see SOFTBALL, page B4



WINDMILL — Senior pitcher Sarah Swor has been solid for the Flames so far this season. She has a 3.31 ERA in 10 games, starting 6 and garnering a 3-3 record. She has given up 17 earned runs in 36 innings pitched.

Sports
At
Liberty

Baseball

vs. Monmouth,
Sat. 11 a.m.
(DH) and Sun. 1
p.m.

Softball
vs. Norfolk
State,

Wed. 2 p.m.
(DH)

vs. Hampton,
Fri. 12 p.m. and
Sat. 1 p.m.

vs. Georgetown,
Fri. 2 p.m. and
Sat. 9 a.m.

MCKAY: Ready to take over the Big South

Continued from page B1

He and his staff were told in late February they would be fired at the end of the season according to ESPN.com. The effect was devastating on the Lobos.

At the time of the firing, the team was 15-13, but they ended the season with three straight losses and a first-round ousting in the Mountain West Tournament.

New Mexico's loss was Liberty's gain. It was McKay, however, who sought out Barber.

"Once I heard the Liberty job was open, I waited on Jeff to call," said a smiling McKay. "I got tired of waiting, so I called him."

Barber did some checking around and heard nothing but good things about McKay.

"Everything we heard was extremely positive," said Barber.

Liberty gives McKay the "opportunity to feel freedom

of expression and belief" about his faith.

"I was chastised for openly sharing my faith (at other schools)," said McKay.

He hopes to bring Liberty to "Gonzaga-like success," though he has only seen the team 4-5 times on film and once yesterday during a team workout.

His style of basketball? "Whatever style helps us win," said McKay.

Sophomore Anthony Smith, who has two years of eligibility left, is excited about the opportunity to play under a "big time coach" and not worried about the potential of changing systems.

"Basketball is basketball," said Smith.

McKay currently has only one staff member, but he already has ideas on where to look. He was scheduled to meet with the team later on Monday afternoon.

Contact Jared Pierce at jpierce2@liberty.edu.



Several personnel moves have been made this offseason in the National Football League, but maybe none have a more immediate impact than this past week's Houston and Atlanta swap.

With their trade on Wednesday, the Falcons received some draft picks and swapped first rounders with the Texans in exchange for starting quarterback Michael Vick's backup, Matt Schaub.

Consequently, David Carr — the Texans' first ever draft pick and starting quarterback since day one for Houston — was released on Friday.

What I don't understand here is why the Texans cut David Carr.

I realize he has thrown a lot of interceptions — 65 to be exact — in his five seasons in Houston, but he has completed 60 percent of his passes.

That's not too shabby on a team with no protection.

Here is the most telling stat of all, though. Carr was sacked a whopping 249 times in five seasons.

To me, that sounds like he doesn't have a good offensive line in front of him.

You can only throw when you have time, and if you are getting sacked in what amounts to an average of three-plus sacks a game, you are going to want to just get rid of the ball before you get creamed.

He has been sacked more than six times in a game countless times, and you cannot put your quarterback through that kind of beating and expect him to be a star — it's just not going to happen.

I am by no means saying that he is relinquished of all blame for the Texans miserable record since its inception.

At the same time, though, he can-

not shoulder the entire blame as he has done throughout his time in Texas.

If you are the Texans organization, or a fan for that matter, you cannot expect Schaub to come in and turn that team around.

Hey, if he does, good for him, and good for Houston, but it won't happen immediately.

When looking at Schaub's stats, you have to look at the team around him.

The offensive line for Atlanta is in the top-five in the league, if not better.

They have opened holes for Warrick Dunn and Michael Vick that you could drive a tractor-trailer through. They have made Vick actually look good at times, which is an aberration in itself.

Almost any quarterback could thrive behind that line.

Going back to Schaub, though. In three years he has started just two games, and he didn't win either of them. He is 84 of 161 passing in his three seasons with 1,033 yards, six touchdowns, and six interceptions.

That means the Texans released a veteran who completed 60 percent of his passes — Carr — to name Schaub the outright starter with a completion percentage of 52 percent — a 52 percent completion rate behind a stellar line, mind you.

Granted, he averages more than Carr per completion, and his touch-down to interception ratio is better than Carr's, but he played backup on a winning team — for the most part.

Carr, on the other hand, has not had a winning season with Houston.

Should the trade have been made to send Schaub to Houston? Absolutely.

Should the Texans have told Carr goodbye? Absolutely not.

What makes Schaub try harder in camp? What drives him to be better, other than the will to win on its own? Nothing does.

They could have made this training camp a competition between the two guys for the starting slot. May the best quarterback win.

Instead, the Texans are going to bank on Schaub starting all 16 games without getting hurt.

If they weren't relying solely on Schaub, they would have a good veteran to back Schaub up, like, oh, I don't know — David Carr.

Instead they have Sage Rosenfels and Bradlee Van Pelt. Who, you say? Yeah, that's my point exactly.

Rosenfels is a six-year veteran who has been a backup his whole career. He is another touted QB that never made it in the NFL.

Don't ask me how he even still has a job in the league (but here I am writing about him while he's making a half-million bucks sitting on the bench).

He has done an okay job as a backup, but if he was thrown into the starting mix because of injury, he likely would falter as well.

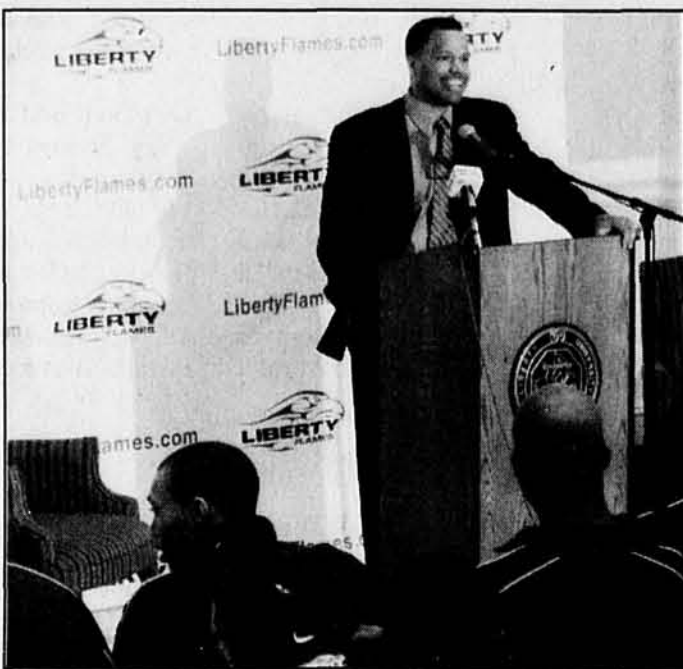
Van Pelt was drafted in 2004 by the Denver Broncos, and he has not thrown a pass in a game since 2005.

In that season, he completed two of his eight passes for seven yards — once again, a backup that would not do well as a starter.

I hope for the Texans' sake that this move pays off for them, but can we really count on a backup that has not had much experience at all to turn a franchise around?

I hope so, but no quarterback can be expected to thrive with the shaky offensive line of the Texans.

Contact Matthew Baer at mdbaer@liberty.edu.



SMILING FOR THE CROWD — New Men's Basketball Head Coach Ritchie McKay answers questions from the media as his new squad looks on.

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Gearing up for the gridiron: A breakdown of the Flames non-conference football schedule for the 2007 season

COMMENTARY



Jared Pierce

Well, the Flames released their 2007 football schedule.

This is (sort of) old news to some, but new to those who don't read libertyflames.com everyday.

(On a separate note, Liberty has one of the finest

athletic Web sites around. After trying to obtain tons of info from various university athletic sites, I have found that Liberty's may not be flashy or fancy, but it is extremely user-friendly.

My only gripe would be the useless 24-style clock in the top right. I'm sorry, but I just don't need to know how many days, hours, minutes and seconds I am away from the next Liberty athletic event.)

Anyways, I digress. Here is a team-by-team breakdown of each non-conference opponent Liberty will face this season.

Sept. 1: Tusculum College (Home)

Mascot (Location): Pioneers (Tenn.)

Conference: South Atlantic Conference (Division II).

2006 Results: Tusculum matched Liberty's last season record of 6-5 overall. Not great — but to be fair, it did play top-ranked D-II teams such as No. 3 North Alabama (Loss), No. 13 Newberry (Loss) and formerly ranked Bethel (Win).

The Pioneers also defeated woeful St. Paul's (2-8 last season) by one point more than Liberty did, 28-0.

Side Note: The team's Web site has this headline — "2003 SAC Champion."

That's kind of like winning your March Madness office pool and leaving the winning bracket framed on your office door for the next four years.

Game Prediction: The Pioneers return quarterback Corey Russell, who threw for more than 1,500 yards and 15 touchdowns while running for 433 more yards last season. They also get top rusher Patrick King back.

With Liberty losing crucial defensive leadership, it might be a long day for the Flames. Nevertheless, Liberty pulls out a nail biter at home, 31-28.

Sept. 8: Shippensburg University (Home)

Mascot (Location): Raiders (Pa.)

Conference: Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (Division II).

2006 Results: Though the Raiders managed only a 5-6 record, they scored at least 14 points in nine of the 11 games and won by two

touchdowns or more in three of their five wins. However, they lost by two or more touchdowns in five of their six losses.

Side Note: The losses to Indiana and California on their schedule don't look too bad. That is until you realize they are not the major universities of two U.S. states, but instead oddly named colleges in Pennsylvania. Also, when you pull up the season stats for football, the part at the top of the browser says 'baseball stats.' Even their Web site is confused by this game of "football."

Game Prediction: Shippensburg's defense allowed just over 23 points per game last season. That's not a bad total, but it does not help when your offense can only score 21 points per game.

On top of that, only one of the top three tacklers from last season will return. Not good for the Raiders against a much more offensively charged Liberty team. The Flames take this contest, 35-14.

Sept. 15: College of William and Mary (Away)

Mascot (Location): Tribe (Va.)

Conference: Atlantic 10 (Division I-AA).

2006 Results: The Tribe went a dismal 3-8 last season.

Maybe Willie and Mary should join the Big South. Two of last season's wins came against teams from that conference (Liberty and VMI).

Side Note: The Tribe won the 2004 A-10 title, but there was no banner on the Web site. Someone at Tusculum needs to check into this.

Game Prediction: The Tribe defense will suffer from personnel losses at pivotal positions, which sees a combined 289 tackles follow out the door.

With the exception of running back Elijah Brooks, the offense keeps stability. As this is a home game and the second in a row against the Big South (VMI), Willie and Mary should take the Flames out only after a bitter battle, 28-27.

Sept. 22: Elon University (Away)

Mascot (Location): Phoenix (N.C.)

Conference: Southern Conference (Division I-AA).

2006 Results: The Phoenix finished a meager 5-6 last season but managed a win over Big South Conference Champion Coastal Carolina. That win, however, came early in the season. The last time Elon played the Flames was 2004 in Lynchburg. Liberty won that season ending match, 27-17.

Side Note: Elon's head coach is named Pete Lembo. How many headlines has his

name been good for? No less than three per season. "Elon in 'Lembo.'" "(Star Player) in 'Lembo' with head coach." "Phoenix hover in 'Lembo.'" It's just too easy.

Game Prediction: Home is not a special place for Elon. Last season, they lost more games at home than they won (2-4) and only averaged a bit more than 6,000 fans per home game (in comparison, Liberty averaged more than 11,000 per game last season). With little home field advantage and an even more talented Liberty team, the Flames soar past the Phoenix, 28-18.

Sept. 29: St. Francis University (Home)

Mascot (Location): Red Flash (Pa.)

Conference: Northeast Conference (Division I-AA).

2006 Results: After enduring a rough seven game losing streak in the middle of the season, the Red Flash were only able to muster a 3-8 record. Their only wins came at home, and two were against conference foes with a combined 6-16 record. The other win? It was a 38-3 drubbing of Saint Peter's College, which ended the season with an (un)impressive 2-8 record.

Side Note: One of the three wins for the Red Flash last season came against the Wagner College Seahawks. This season's schedule shows Wagner's homecoming game against Marist College.

The weird part? It is the second game of the season. Who has homecoming after only one game? Do they pick the homecoming king and queen a year in advance just to have time to prepare the floats?

Maybe they just dislike Marist and wanted to play them for homecoming, but they could only get a week two game worked out. Who knows?

Game Prediction: St. Francis plays in a weak conference and loses too many games to attract top recruits. Liberty will dash past the Red Flash, 42-10.

Oct. 6: University of Toledo (Away)

Mascot (Location): Rockets (Ohio)

Conference: Mid-American Conference (Division I).

2006 Results: The Rockets just missed a bowl berth with a 5-7 record in 2006. They were stellar at home (4-2), but embarrassing on the road (1-5). They scored more than 30 points five times during the season, going 4-1 when they did.

Side Note: Toledo's home stadium, known as the Glass Bowl, was originally built in the

1930s as a Workers Progress Administration (WPA) project.

As a part of the New Deal, the WPA was formed after the Great Depression of the late 1920s sent most of America's working class into the unemployment line. It has been updated throughout the years to adjust to advances in technology.

Game Prediction: Toledo plays in a much tougher conference against higher quality foes, so don't let their record confuse you. They have the best 2007 recruiting class in the MAC and offensive tackle John Greco is on the Lombardi Trophy watch.

Liberty also arrives on the third home game in a row for the Rockets, who play great in the Glass Bowl. Expect Toledo to thoroughly dismantle the Flames, 35-14.

Oct. 27: Presbyterian (Homecoming)

Mascot (Location): Blue Hose (S.C.)

Conference: South Atlantic Conference (Division II).

2006 Results: At 7-4, the Blue Hose boast only the second winning record of Liberty's non-conference opponents.

Side Note: I feel bad for Presbyterian. Homecoming matches are supposed to be easy wins. Not only are they Liberty's homecoming foe this year, but they played the same role against fellow SAC conference school Tusculum.

The funny part? They not only beat the Pioneers that game, but they finished two spots ahead in conference play as well.

Game Prediction: The Blue Hose will play, including Liberty, four Big South opponents next season. Liberty has lost its last two homecoming games, but is much improved over both of those seasons. Liberty makes the homecoming crowd happy with a 31-21 victory.

Final Analysis

If my predictions hold true, then Liberty will have a non-conference schedule of 5-2. I understand that some scheduling difficulties forced the Flames to play two D-II schools, but maybe having two lighter games will help Liberty's confidence going into the William and Mary game.

Playing Toledo will be a good measuring stick for the Rocco program. They will probably lose the game, but if they play well, recruiting in the talent-rich state of Ohio may get easier.

Next week, I will run down the conference schedule and see who the Flames biggest Big South worry is this upcoming season.

Contact Jared Pierce at jpierce2@liberty.edu.

Track runs against itself BASEBALL: Flames drop weekend series against High Point Univ.

By Eric Brown
SPORTS REPORTER

The Liberty men's and women's track teams traveled five miles across town to compete in the Lynchburg Invitational at Lynchburg College on Saturday.

The newly renovated Shellenberger Field played host to Liberty as well as top Division-II and III teams such as the College of Wooster, Capital University, the University of Findlay and Glenville State.

Success came early for the both the Flames men's and women's teams as some of Liberty's top throwers flexed their muscles in the field events.

Junior Jon Hart won the men's shot put with a throw of 55-08.50. Junior Clendon Henderson, who set a Big South Conference record last week, took home the victory in the discus.

"(Clendon) was more consistent this week than he was last week, even though he threw farther last week," said Associate Head Coach Lance Bingham. "He's doing well."

Freshmen Elliott Galeone also had success, finishing first in the men's javelin.

On the women's side, senior Caitlyn Sutterfield picked up victories in the shot put, discus and hammer throw, while freshman Lacey Cunningham took home a victory in the javelin.

In the running events, the biggest competition for the Flames and Lady Flames turned out to be each other.

It began in the 400-meter run with a battle of wills. Sophomore Phil Leineweber ousted out his friend and teammate, junior Josh Gilreath, by less than a 10th of a second with a time of 47.85. Both competitors qualified for the IC4A championships in May.

"What makes it a race is having your teammate or any competitor next to you," said Leineweber. "We knew it would be close, because we had both been splitting about the same in the 4x4."

Team competition continued to be the theme for Liberty as three Lady Flames finished the 200 meter run with a time of 25 seconds flat.

Lynchburg College officials finally determined, after going to the nearest thousandth of a second, that sophomore Andrea Beckles won the race.

Junior Charlene Hibbert and senior Arlene Zelinkas finished second and third respectively. "I think everybody just wanted to win," said Beckles. "My main goal was to just run my own race and finish strong."

The three ladies teamed up with freshmen Sheronica Henton to win the 4 x 100 meter relay in 49.19. Zelinkas placed first in the 100-meter hurdles with ease and Beckles won the 100-meter dash with a time of 12.15.

Hibbert found even more success in the field events as she won both the women's long and triple jump.

Junior Marie Williams came away with a win in the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 1:05.06, beating out her teammate, junior Jennifer Ward, by only six one-hundredths of a second.

Junior Piper Newby, who normally runs the 5000-meter run, cruised to victory in the 1500-meter run with a personal best of 4:47.55.

"The whole race felt comfortable," said Newby. "I know I could go faster now if I know how to pace it."

Other winners included sophomore Tim O'Donnell, who won both the men's 110-meter and 400-meter hurdles, and senior Travis Campbell, who won the 800 meter run with a time of 1:54.76.

Sophomore Oronde Vassell leaped to victory in the long jump and junior Matthew Parker cleared the 6-10.75 bar in the high jump to qualify for the NCAA regional championships.

"We had some very good performances," said Head Coach Brant Tolsma.

"It's kind of a breather week for us, but when you're getting personal bests, that's all you ever want."

The next meet takes place on campus as Liberty hosts the ASICS Collegiate Invitational and Multi.

The meet begins at 1 p.m. on Friday, March 30 and concludes on Saturday, beginning at 10 a.m.

Contact Eric Brown at eqbrown@liberty.edu.

Continued from page B1

The recurring theme for the Flames this year has been strong starting pitching, and junior Michael Solbach provided just that on his way to earning his fifth victory of the season.

Solbach pitched six innings and allowed just one run on five hits. He has allowed only 31 hits in 41.2 innings and has posted an impressive 1.73 ERA for the Flames.

Things would get tougher on Saturday, though, as the Flames faced the Panthers' Eammon Portice, who, according to Royer, is one of the best pitchers in the Big South.

"He is certainly one of the top two pitchers in the conference," said Royer.

Unfortunately for Royer and the Flames, Portice was that and more. The junior from Oakland Park, Fla., pitched seven shutout innings and recorded six strikeouts for the Panthers, who scored eight runs in the fifth on their way to a 10-2 victory.

The bats that had produced 32 runs in the last three games for the Flames fell silent.

No player had more than one hit for Liberty.

Sophomore Dustin Umberger was roughed up by the Panthers, allowing nine runs on 11 hits in just 4.2 innings of work.

With the loss, Umberger drops to 2-3 on the season.

In the rubber match on Sunday, the Panthers kept up their winning ways, taking the weekend series, 8-4. For the second game in a row, Liberty managed only seven hits, and no player collected more than one hit.

Sophomore Tyler Light picked up his first loss of the year for the Flames, allowing seven hits and four earned runs in 4 1/3 innings.

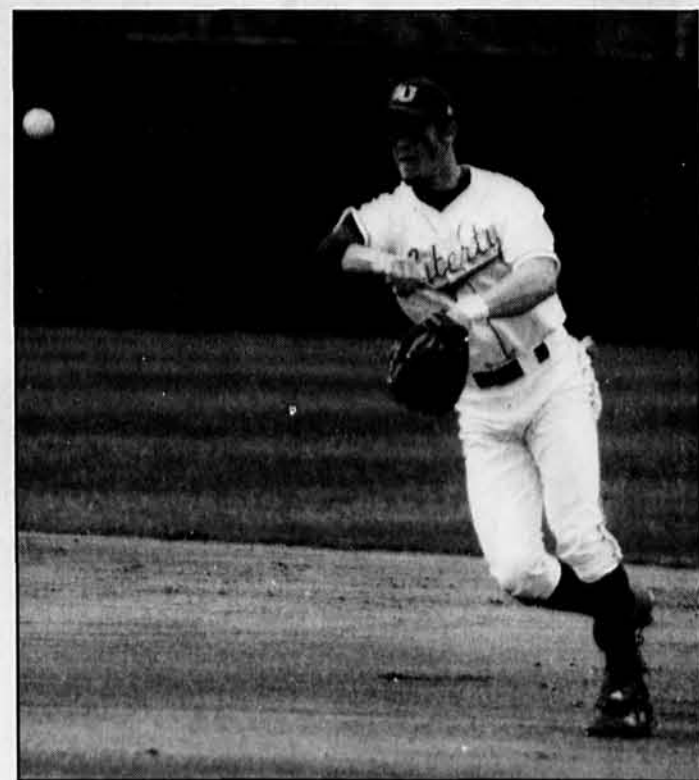
Sophomore Tommy Bussey and Nanry both smashed solo homeruns for Liberty.

The top half of the High Point lineup did most of the damage to the Flames, pounding eight hits and driving in five RBI.

The loss drops Liberty to 16-10 on the season and a 3-2 record in the Big South Conference.

The Flames resume play this week on Wednesday at George Mason before they return home for a non-conference weekend series against the Monmouth Muhawks.

Contact Mitchell Malcheff at mjmalcheff@liberty.edu.



CALEB ATKINS

TOMMY GUN — Sophomore Tommy Bussey fields a ground ball during Liberty's win on Wednesday. The Flames were victors despite committing three errors.

Men's tennis drops ninth straight decision while the ladies defeat JMU to improve their record

Jake Petersen
SPORTS REPORTER

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, both the men's and women's tennis teams played host to the Dukes of James Madison University. The men's team — coming off a previous day's loss to Richmond — was looking to earn just its fourth victory of the season heading into the final month of play.

However, the Dukes held the upper hand throughout most of the match, due in large part to sweeping the doubles competition.

Freshman Chad Simpson, who was teamed with junior Jordan Trojan at number one doubles, said, "Obviously, (we need to work on) our doubles because we lost all three of our matches. It gives the other team momentum going into the singles matches and forces us to have to win four out of the six singles matches instead of three."

Simpson and the Flames only mustered one singles match victory. Both Trojan and Simpson lost, with Simpson giving way to John Snead in a grueling two-hour and fifteen-minute battle. Trojan bowed out to Jesse Tarr 6-3, 6-0, while the freshman trio of Luis Olivera, Franco Valdez and Juan Reyes were unable to get anything going in the other single's matches of the afternoon.

Junior Sebastian Pena was the lone bright spot for the Flames on this day. Playing at number three singles, Pena was able to earn the only point of the day for the men, beating Mike Smith 7-6 (7-5), 6-4.

"The main thing I did was stay consistent and confident," said Pena.

"I tried to get my first serve in so I could have a chance at winning every game I served. It gave me a chance to break him, and I did. We know we have to win our points to have a chance to win these close matches and we need to get our confidence back."

On the women's side, junior Martyna Hanusz finished off the Dukes in dramatic fashion. After the Lady Flames jumped

out to an early lead by winning two of three doubles matches, JMU needed to win four of the six singles points to secure a victory while the Lady Flames needed only three.

Hanusz had battled through a tough match with feisty Dukes senior Lauren Graham throughout most of the afternoon. With the match on the line for both teams, though, Hanusz stepped her game up and defeated Graham in the third set.

With his player showing obvious signs of fatigue, Lady Flames Head Coach Chris Johnson provided some words of inspiration for Hanusz, which allowed her to cap off the team's victory over JMU with a bang.

"Sometimes players think that when they get into a tough match with someone, they need to change their game," said Johnson. "I told Martyna not to change her game and to keep playing the game that got her to this point."

"As far as this year, these girls always give one hundred percent effort. It's not always the same girls winning, which was shown today, and we're able to come out with big wins."

With their 4-3 victory, the Lady Flames move their record to 5-6 on the season, while the men's ninth consecutive loss brings their record to 3-10.

"We're a young team and we're trying to rebuild — everybody knows that," said Johnson. "We are continuing to improve and although today was a tough loss, we still had a good showing. As a team, we need to work on understanding the strategy and tactics of the game and focus on finding ways to win."

Both teams will be back at it this week as Coastal Carolina and Charleston Southern make the trip to Lynchburg this weekend for some Big South action. The men will play Coastal Carolina on Friday afternoon at 1 p.m., while the women play Saturday at 1 p.m. A dual match against Charleston Southern will follow on Sunday afternoon. Match time is scheduled for 1 p.m.

Contact Jake Petersen at jtpetersen@liberty.edu.

SOFTBALL: Lady Flames prepare for seven more games this week

Continued from page B1

The second day of the tournament pitted Liberty against only one opponent, as the Lady Flames went head-to-head with nationally ranked Michigan.

The Wolverines came into the game as the sixth-best team in the nation.

Sophomore Sarah Ellis pitched the entire game and was excellent from the mound.

She tossed a shutout while giving the Lady Flames a chance to come away with the win.

Liberty opened up the scoring in the top of the sixth inning when Jeffs and Moore scored after a double from Williams.

Michigan's Tiffany Worthy showed the only imminent threat to the shutout when she hit a ball high to left field.

Jefferson was able to make the diving catch, forcing Michigan to leave the bases loaded as the sixth inning expired.

After the near rally, the Lady Flames ended the upset with a 2-0 victory.

Michigan is the third nationally ranked team the Lady Flames have been

able to beat this season and just the sixth in program history.

After defeating one nationally ranked team the day before, the Lady Flames woke up Sunday with another on their plate.

Northwestern University and Liberty met for the first time on the softball diamond.

The Wildcats shutout the Lady Flames with a final score of 8-0 as the seventh-ranked team in the nation's freshman pitching sensation Lauren Delany threw a shutout. It was her fifth of the season.

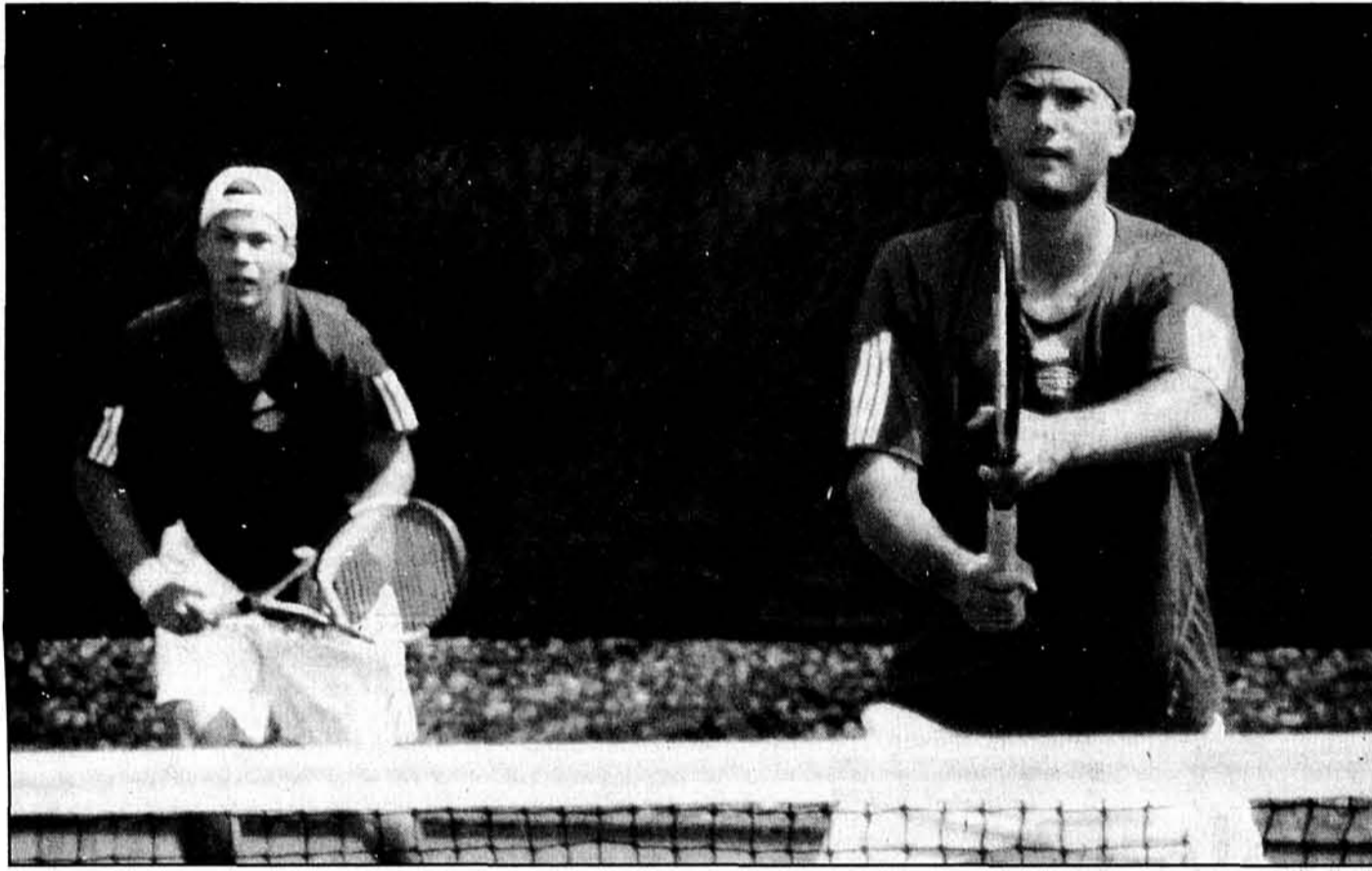
Only once did Liberty threaten to break the shutout.

With the bases loaded and only one out in the fifth inning, Delany struck out Liberty's next two batters, keeping them off the board and securing the win for Northwestern.

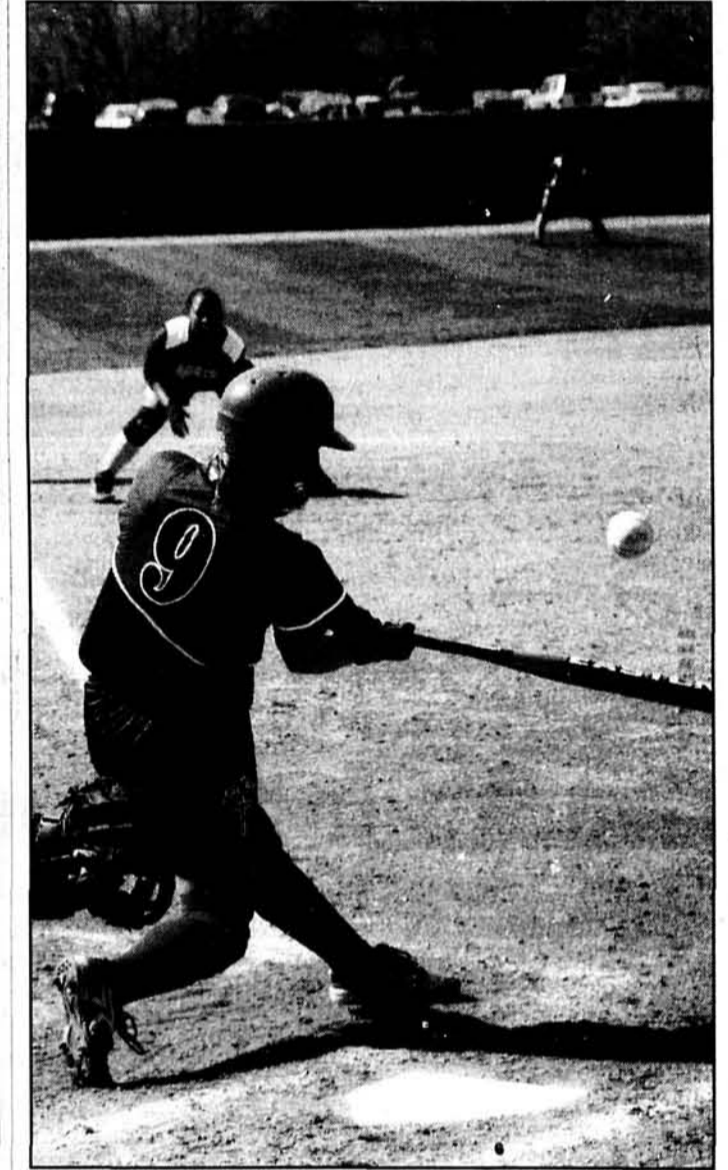
The weekend leaves the Lady Flames with a record of 15-12.

The results for Monday's double-header against top-ranked Tennessee were not available at press time.

Contact Will Luper at wlluper@liberty.edu.



GUARDING THE NET — Freshman Chad Simpson and junior Jordan Trojan await the James Madison return during their doubles match.



LIFT OFF — Senior Jessica Moore has been a solid contributor for the Lady Flames this season. She is batting a stellar .380 — fourth in the BSC — with 22 RBIs. She also leads the conference with eight homers and a .717 slugging percentage.

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— www.strange-facts.com



Quote of the week:

"If Christianity is really true, then it involves the whole man, including his intellect and creativity. Christianity is not just 'dogmatically' true or 'doctrinally' true. Rather, it is true to what is there, true in the whole area of the whole man in all of life."

— Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer
American theologian, philosopher and pastor

33 Miles: Up-and-coming band to nationally release its debut album on April 10

By Hilary Sutton
LIFE! REPORTER

The Christian music industry is continually being flooded with new bands hoping to get their music heard. Some enter the industry in hopes of being "the next Chris Tomlin," while others choose Christian music because their image and sound fit the genre best. And then there are groups like 33 Miles, which recognize the Christian music industry as their undeniable calling.

"We know why God brought us together," said band member Chris Lockwood. "We really believe that God has called us to the church. We feel like we've been called to remind the church and ourselves of who we are in Christ and whom we serve."

"As Christians," said Lockwood, "we have grace, mercy and power beyond comprehension and understanding. We just want to encourage the church to look to Jesus. Don't forget who you are in Christ."

The group is comprised of three musicians — Jason Barton on lead vocals, Chris

Lockwood on guitar and vocals, and Collin Stoddard on piano and vocals.

33 Miles' national debut album, which is self-titled, will be released on April 10. The album consists of 11 original songs written by the trio. The first track, "What Could Be Better," has an energizing pop-country sound reminiscent of Rascal Flatts. "There is a God," track four, is a worshipful ballad reminding its hearer of God's majesty. The name "33 Miles" is a metaphor for the 33 years Christ lived on Earth. Barton explained, "He was a friend to the friendless, He loved the unlovable, and He gave of Himself selflessly by dying on the cross in our place so that we could live forever."

The band boasts a diverse fanbase. Barton said, "I think a lot of it is because we do take all our influences and put them together. I think harmonies are something that people love, but you don't see a lot of it in pop music, you see a lot of it in country and gospel, but when you put three-part harmony into pop music, fused

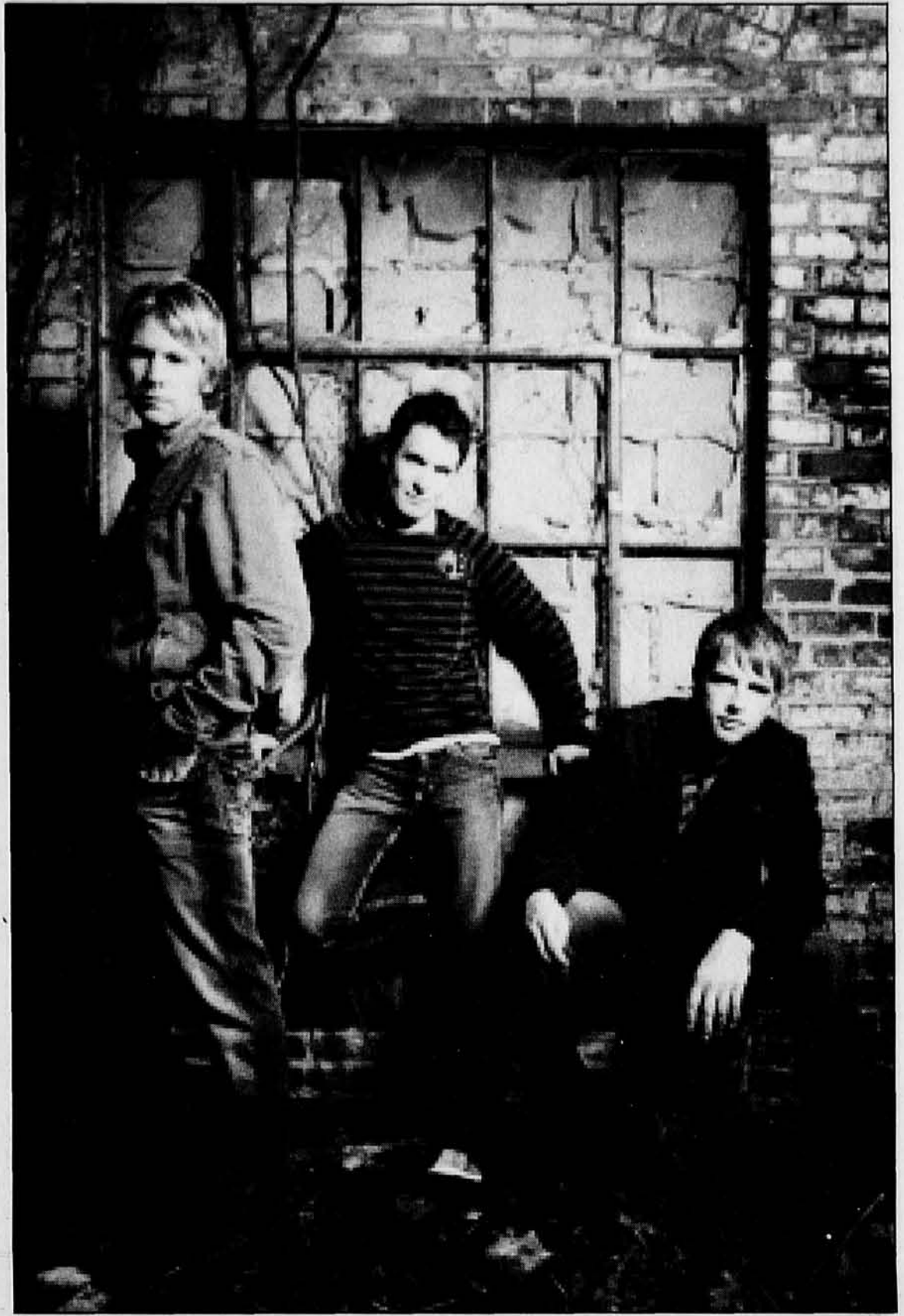
with everything else, it creates a sound that's more universal than anything. That's what makes us a little different from everyone."

Though 33 Miles does not have an earth-shatteringly new sound, it is a band filled with strong soloists and tight harmonies.

The self-titled album is easy to listen to. The band is currently touring and leading worship at churches across the country, so be on the lookout. They may be singing on your church's stage this summer.

The group's mission is simple. "We want to just love on God's people," Barton says. "Just because you are a Christian doesn't mean you live a perfect life. There are plenty of hurts. If we can come into a church and encourage them, build them up, edify them, and get them to a place where they are excited about what God's going to do in their life, then we feel like we've accomplished our purpose."

Contact Hilary Sutton at hlsutton@liberty.edu.



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK — Set to release on April 10, the self-titled debut album of 33 Miles is said to be easy to listen to and eclectic in nature.

Innovative technology makes its home at LU

By Kristi Kirkland
LIFE! REPORTER

Technology changes every day with a steady beat that creates a loud crescendo of new inventions and electronic improvements to just about everything that moves, beeps, flashes, flies or drives.

Fascinating developments are being made all the time as products get smaller and speed and capabilities increase. Liberty University is not exempt from these technology advances and, in fact, actively seeks out progress.

A few years ago, Charles Clark, a circuit board designer from Michigan, decided to make a donation of the culmination of his work to Liberty University. Clark's children had attended Liberty and, as Liberty University Vice President for University Relations Dr. Barry N. Moore said, Clark wanted to "give something back to Liberty for the great education and Christian experience his kids had received."

At the time of his donation, Clark already had more than 30 years of experience in the circuit board industry. With his knowledge and expertise in the field he created an innovative product and donated his invention to Liberty.

"Clark identified a need and brilliantly put an invention to it," Moore said.

According to Moore, Clark's design is complex but simple. Most of technology — cars, computers, cell phones, airplanes, satellites and even watches — consist of circuit boards of one size or another. Just as with human beings, communication must take place between these circuit boards if the equipment is to function properly.

Communication by electrical impulse is passed along in copper wires that connect multiple layers of circuit boards via small metal connecting pins in the circuit boards. Clark realized that this process, which hadn't changed much in decades, should be faster and more efficient, and he took the initiative and invented the means to do so.

When Clark made the donation, the university subsequently filed for a patent with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), said Moore. The patent

process is lengthy and the patent is still in the pending process, but positive progress has already been made with the USPTO. Vice Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. said, "Our patent attorney in Houston is a veteran of the electronics industry and has been a very valuable resource."

Falwell decided in late summer of 2006 that it was time for Liberty to partner with a

company that had the unique knowledge and skills needed to internationally market Clark's invention. Moore was assigned the responsibility of finding the "right" company and making a strategic business partnership a reality. To that end TopLine Corporation was chosen. Together Liberty and TopLine have created Mirror Semiconductor (www.mirrorsemi.com), the company responsible for marketing Clark's "mirror pinout" technology. Martin Hart, president of TopLine Corporation in Garden Grove, Calif., says that by "reverse wiring" the insides of integrated circuits, Clark created mirrored pinouts. Combining these mirrored pinout-integrated circuits with "standard integrated circuits" shortens the distance of wiring needed between components.

"We feel about 98 percent certain that when the dust finally clears at the USPTO, this donation to Liberty University will be well into the multimillions of dollars worth of value," said Moore.

The next step is to identify the partners who will build this product for the customers who will purchase it.

Hart has been using a variety of marketing initiatives such as on-site representation of mirrored pinouts to key trade shows around the world, as well as attending seminars, visiting with current customers who might have an interest and providing brochures and literature to hundreds of technology companies.

In an effort to help Hart's marketing efforts, Moore has also been reaching out to some of his own contacts in the industry and inside the federal government. "Ships, planes, tanks, satellites — all of these use printed circuit boards. A little pressure from DOD (Department of Defense) to their contractors to look at Mirrored Pinouts can also be an avenue for helping sell the patent."

These are exciting technology times at Liberty, and more are on the horizon. "Within a couple of years this Intellectual Property technology patent from Charles Clark should be providing a constant revenue stream to Liberty University," Moore said.

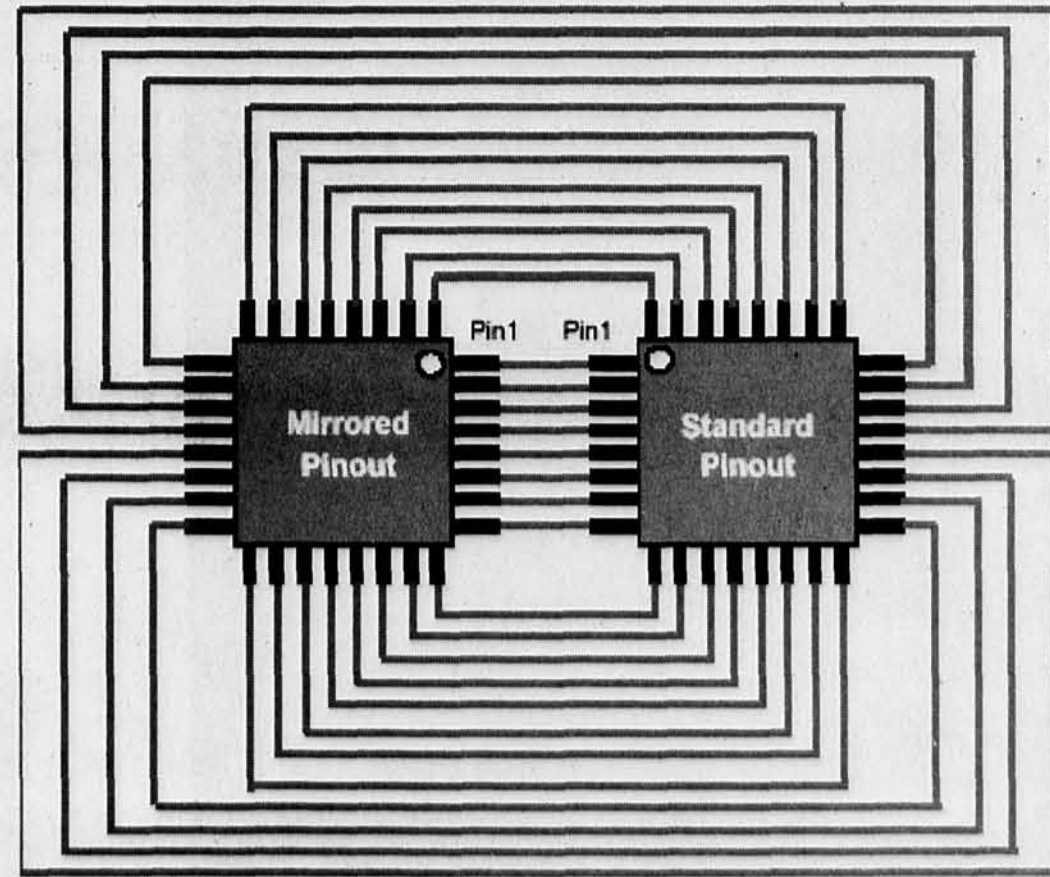
This venture will also lead to "job-openings on a global basis, and what better place to interview than right at Liberty — the home of the mirrored pinouts patent," Hart said.

Mirrored pinouts will also play a role within Liberty's new School of Engineering and Computational Sciences, which is set to open in August of 2007.

"I'm confident that the new school will also find a way 'outside the box' to make good use of this IP donated technology," said Moore.

Falwell said, "We think it is our responsibility to develop this donated technology to its fullest potential in order to help create an endowment that will sustain the university and allow it to continue to fulfill its future mission in future generations."

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BLAZIN' CIRCUITS — Charles Clark, whose children have attended Liberty in the past, has donated a technology that is designed to improve the overall performance of circuit boards.

company that had the unique knowledge and skills needed to internationally market Clark's invention.

Moore was assigned the responsibility of finding the "right" company and making a strategic business partnership a reality.

To that end TopLine Corporation was chosen. Together Liberty and TopLine have created Mirror Semiconductor (www.mirrorsemi.com), the company responsible for mar-

keting Clark's "mirror pinout" technology. Martin Hart, president of TopLine Corporation in Garden Grove, Calif., says that by "reverse wiring" the insides of integrated circuits, Clark created mirrored pinouts. Combining these mirrored pinout-integrated circuits with "standard integrated circuits" shortens the distance of wiring needed between components.

While waiting for the patent process to be completed, steps are being taken in other areas.

In mid-September of 2006 the "commercialization of the product began," said Hart.

Rock out at LU:

Student Government Association to host annual Battle of the Bands



DAVID MAXAM

By Carrie Caldwell
LIFE REPORTER

Get ready to rock out again as the Student Government Association (SGA) hosts the third annual Battle of the Bands. On April 13, SGA will do its part and host aspiring bands from our campus.

What started three years ago has now become an LU tradition. SGA President Nathan Cooley said, "We want to see both the bands and the crowd having a great time, and highlight some quality talent that Liberty has within its student body."

Bands that are interested must have at least one member

that attends Liberty University, and the band must also have a recent demo.

So far, SGA has had a large number of bands express interest, but the SGA administration is now narrowing the list down.

"We have a committee that tries the bands out by listening to their demos and reading their lyrics," said Cooley. Bands will be judged on various fields such as quality of music, stage presence and crowd applause.

Dan Dollar, lead singer of last year's Battle of the Bands winner, Chesterton, said, "Battle of the Bands was a blast, and it is a good way to get your name out there."

As words of advice, Cooley said, "Just be yourselves and have fun, just like a first date — be yourself and have fun."

"Be genuine, be humble and be nice to the roadies setting your stuff up," said Dollar.

If you are looking for a night to witness local musical talent and a chance to see Liberty's top bands duke it out for a top spot in LU's Battle of the Bands, then come to the Schilling Center on April 13 at 9 p.m.

For more information about Battle of the Bands, contact the Student Government Association at sga@liberty.edu.

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Now that Spring Break has rushed by faster than you can say, "school is out," I am sure that you are admiring your tan with fond recollections of sand in your hair and the potent smell of sunscreen.

Or, maybe you are like me — pasty and still pinching at the disdainfully-obtained flesh you inherited over the holidays. From an outside perspective, my Spring Break expeditions leave much to be desired.

Let's see. Freshman year, I went back home to New York only for it to snow while my wife (then, my girlfriend of three months) enjoyed the foaming waves of St. Pete's Beach in Florida.

Sophomore year, we got a little crazy and decided to spend the break together in the popular destination of Tuscaloosa, Ala. That is not to say that we did not have fun with my wife's sister. In fact, I still have the "Cunningham Family Reunion" shirt I bought at a thrift store there.

Last year was probably my least impressive "trip". I spent 40 hours that week training at Olive Garden and taking the many tests that goes along with it. You're jealous, I'm sure. It's O.K., I understand.

While my break last week would appear to be equally dissatisfying, it was probably one of my favorite usages of seven days I have had in a while — barring my honeymoon, of course.

During my regular school schedule, I barely have enough time to finish all the things that are required of me, so doing things that I want to do usually gets delegated to another day. Spring Break, however, granted me the time to think about the knowledge I want to know and the experiences I need not experience — two aspects of my life that are altogether distinct but heavily connected.

I enjoyed the ability to spend time with friends outdoors. The sun warmed my skin, but my bare feet tensed at the touch of the still thawing soil. This juxtaposition is similar to the way I feel about my current state of affairs.

While almost all of my being is yearning to sip yerba maté in Argentina, I remain grounded in Lynchburg for the next few months until the airplane fires its engines.

It has been a long time since I last enjoyed driving the same road every day

and going the same places, knowing full well what will occur when I get there. I'm tired of the morning malaise that stifles me when abhorrent slivers of light infringe upon my sleep, but not nearly as much as when I don't rise until after 11 a.m.

I do thoroughly enjoy nights here, though, like Tuesday, when a few friends and I piled in the back of a topless Jeep with not an inch of room to spare — cradling one guitar on my lap while resting my arm around the other one in the back as you would with a teenage girlfriend.

We barreled down the road together, away from the apartment where we usually spend our Tuesday nights, sitting around talking and not saying anything while the air is pregnant with unspoken thoughts, worries and dreams. We barreled down the road together — "balled the jack," as Kerouac would say — away from time ill spent, towards creativity and a place that sells pomegranate tea.

Riding in the back seat next to my younger but bigger brother with two friends in the front, the wind began insisting that the buttons on my sweater sound the beat that was pulsating in our synchronous minds.

I look forward to these times, when I can unravel the ball of yarn that is my mind, pull the strings out one at a time and lay them out side by side to understand why.

And I am now looking forward to the few days that lay before me (it is now Thursday the 22nd), where I will be able to enjoy a few Central Virginian nights up in the Blue Ridge Mountains and escape from the grip of computers, cars and air conditioning — to exist in a realm where the only thing distracting you from God is your own thoughts.

I am writing this after I have spent an entire night up in the "Champion" office, and at the moment, nothing sounds more pleasing as when Woody Guthrie sings, "I'd like to rest my heavy head tonight on a bed of [Virginia] stars. I'd like to lay my weary bones tonight on a bed of [Virginia] stars."

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